

COURIER

H66A-073

~~PREVIOUS/RYBAT/SECRET~~

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

2003

LINCOLN

Chief of Station, Guatemala E 3

Operational - EEI # 41

Communications System in the Asuncion Mita area

Reference: HULA-454 dated 14 April 1954

1. On 21 and 22 April 1954 ESPERANCE visited the above area and tried to obtain all possible data on the communications system. He advised the following and submitted rough sketches, where possible, showing position of the wires.
2. There is a telegraph circuit (wire) from Guatemala City to Cuilapa to Jutiapa to Progreso to Asuncion Mita to San Cristobal to Atescatempa to Jerez to Zapolitan to Jutiapa. He followed the line along the road from Guatemala City to San Cristobal. There the telegraph operator advised that the circuit extended to Atescatempa to Jerez to Zapolitan and back to Jutiapa via comapa.
3. The above operator stated there is also a telegraph circuit from Jutiapa to Progreso to Santa Catarina Mita, Chaparron to Jalapa. ESPERANCE was not able to find these lines leading out of Progreso.
4. There is a telephone service between Guatemala City and Jutiapa but ESPERANCE was unable to learn whether this was wire or radio. He was not able to verify the existence of a radio circuit from the 3rd Military Zone Headquarters to Guatemala City. There is no telephone service from Jutiapa to the Salvador border or to points in between.
5. All telegraph and long distance telephone service ends at 9:00 p.m. and is resumed at 8:00 a.m.
6. ESPERANCE advised the following with regard to severing the lines:
 - (1) Salvador border to Asuncion Mita. About five miles from the Salvador border, the wires cross the road and are only about ten feet from the ground. They could be pulled down by a truck or car. This is at the western end of Lake Atescatempa. Over the hill from the lake the poles cross back to the south side and leave the roadway for about 100 feet inside a field.
 - (2) Asuncion Mita to Progreso. About a mile west of Asuncion Mita the road starts up a steep grade for about 5 miles. The wires follow the road. There is a point about half way up where the poles are on the edge of the road and cross canyons 200 to 300 feet. The poles are of unfinished tree limbs and could be knocked down without a great deal of force. There are numerous places where the lines could be broken

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without being observed.

- (3) Progreso to Jutiapa. The lines between Progreso and Jutiapa follow the road out of Progreso. About 5 miles from Jutiapa the lines leave the road and cut to the right across the hills. Here one could work unseen.
- (4) Jutiapa to Cuilapa. The lines leave the main part of Jutiapa on the south side and cross the old road to Guatemala City. They parallel the old road for about two miles and are about 300 feet from the road. The wires are two strand from the Salvador border to Asuncion Mita and three strand from there to Jutiapa to Cuilapa to Guatemala City.

7. ESPERANCE noticed electric power lines outside Asuncion Mita. He said he noticed the power lines about 100 to 200 feet from the road on the right side as he entered Asuncion Mita from San Cristobal. He stopped his car, raised the hood and pretended to be working on the motor. A pedestrian walked by and ESPERANCE asked him what the lines were and where they went. The pedestrian answered that they were electric power lines which came from a hydroelectric plant (exact location he didn't know but stated that the plant wasn't very good because the lights went off every night.) ESPERANCE could not locate the plant. He thinks it is between Asuncion Mita and the Salvador border and is probably only able to produce enough power for daytime use and shuts down at night.

8. ESPERANCE stated that there were two wooden bridges on the road from Jutiapa to Guatemala which if destroyed would block traffic for 8 to 24 hours. The first bridge is about 15 miles out of Jutiapa toward Cuilapa on the Pan American Highway. The other bridge is on the same road about 2 or 3 miles before reaching Cuilapa. Destruction of these bridges would force traffic from Guatemala to go by way of Jalapa.

9. ESPERANCE made several photographs of the area and the lines but was forced to hide them on the way back to Guatemala. He may be able to go back and pick up the film. If recovered, it will be forwarded by a subsequent dispatch.

10. Attached are 4 sketches prepared from drawings made by ESPERANCE:

- (1) Communications lines from Guatemala to the border as ESPERANCE believes them to exist (overlay on ESSO road map).
- (2) Sketch of Jutiapa showing location of telegraph wires.
- (3) Sketch of Asuncion Mita showing telegraph wires and power line.
- (4) Sketch of road and wires from Asuncion Mita to Salvador border.

Robert B. Riggs

Attachment: 4, as stated.

RBR/rbr

29 April 54

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